

Timothus R. M.

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LETTER

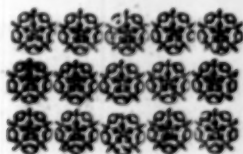
OF

ADVICE

Concerning

Marriage.

By A. B.



L O N D O N,

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Opinion have rendred them unfit or unseemly for Husbands, are yet for Wives not only decent but commendable; and to common welfare so necessary, that the neglect of them is seldom without decay: Hence that thred-bare saying, *If you will thrive, look how you wive.* In which single respect, the very sloth and incapacity of most women now-adays (especially Heirs and Fondlings, bred even to a contempt of Huswifery) is without profuseness a defect scarce to be repair'd by fortune. Wherefore to one that hath already a solid Estate, not to be acquir'd, but well managed & gradually improv'd, 'tis certainly upon this account more profitable to purchase the Wife, whose thrift is it self a yearly, nay weekly revenue; than for one to compass a lump of Money with an excessive Rent-charge attending it: But if to such defect should be added the affectation of our present Court and City-pomp (and what better can be there expected?) no Bank confines such a Torrent, nor can any Pile of wealth afford Fewel for such a Flame; the quantity serving only to accelerate the Consumption.

For doubtless to that Sex an Expence belongs, which though never so demurely carried, far exceeds that of Men; but meeting with Quality and Vanity, knows no measure. Maids, I confess, acting purely for themselves, and for the most part making a Virtue of Necessity, may perhaps with their singular affected Parsimony, with other notable shifts, smother and palliate this expensive humour: indeed it is their Master-piece so to do. But then in the change of their condition (and withal concernment, it should seem, by Marriage) like an unnatural restraint, without extraordinary discretion and kindness to their Husbands,

Husbands, it breaks forth with double violence: their Train is much longer, their Visits and Collations more sumptuous and frequent, their Dresses more curious and elaborate than ours; their Journeys infinitely cumbersome and expensive: Not to mention there Childbeds and Gossipping, to the due equipage whereof all Trades must conspire: yet where are the men that consider this? Can we then expect it from Women? Their partiality is such, that though they cause double the Charge, yet if they bring but half the Estate, they reckon, that as purchasers they have right to spend: a prejudice with our Gallants so general, but withal dangerous, that were it duly weighed, it would strike at the very root of Marriage. Suitors therefore we see are obliged by no means to consult their Reason, much less their Arithmetick; Ignorance may well be styled the Mother of their Devotion.

Howbeit I would not be construed herein to declaim against Marriage: one may I hope blame the Corruptions of Lawyers without irreverence to the Law. Error is but a Foil to Truth, and by redressing abuses, the regular use is best establish'd. Marriage we know is a state necessary both to the Conservation and Comfort of Mankind, consecrated by God himself, who would never have instituted and so recommended it, were it not most consistent with our well-being; but the best perverted, proves the worst: and in nothing hath there been a greater departure from primitive intention than in Marriage, to the bane and scandal of Society.

The root of this, as of all other evils, is Covetousness; but by the fate of irregular Appetites so dazled, that it shoots at random very wide of the mark. To

such as observe the shrewdness of Covetous men in all other pursuits, it may seem a miracle, that herein they should act with so little foresight ; and might perhaps be referred to divine Justice, thus arraigning their ill-gotten Estates. But alas, their Example, with the fame they carry for wisdom, hath misguided persons of better Principles ; whom to reclaim were methinks a publick service: Wherefore leaving those to their incorrigible vice and delusion, I frame my discourse to you, who may communicate it to some honest Gentlemen of your acquaintance, where you judge it needful or useful.

Our Gentry may now be considered under four Conditions or Capacities ; *viz.* Such as have little or nothing to trust to ; such as have bare Competencies ; such as have fair Estates, but encumbered or expectant ; and such as have ample and clear Fortunes.

How needless it is for the first of these to marry needs no proof ; yet if some favourable opportunity should tempt them so to endeavour the improving their condition, which they can hardly much impair, they are partly excusable : only let them not too much triumph in their purchase, nor be surprised if they mend not by their change of Climate, for some that have tried will inform them, there is no Villainage to the Apron-tenure. If in any case such Matches have success, 'tis with Cadets of the Nobility, whose high Birth serves to ballance the Wealth, and bridle the arrogance of women.

The second rate of Gentlemen in former times were observed frequently to advance their Estates by Marriage ; but it was in the Golden age of Female-innocence,

innocence, ere they had tasted the Tree of Knowledge ; whilst their Breeding was strict, their Appetites regular, their Wills governable, and even Heirs were not therefore the worse Wives: The Scene is dangerously altered ; those Pleasure-boats now a-days carrying such Sail, as without skilful and happy Steerage must needs overset in our Seas. Hence with Gentlemen of indifferent Estates, when they go a Fortune-catching, it commonly fares as with the Dog in the Fable ; their prizes in the upshot proving worse to them than Blanks : our Politicians therefore recommend to them Marriage Alamode ; Yet not to flatter the Vice and Prejudice of the Age, I dare maintain, That prudent Wedlock is even for such the more thriving state, and no such Bugbear as some of our Wits represent it ; there being instances enough of our best Gentry with moderate Estates, both living honourably & providing well for Posterity: and nothing now more familiar than to see some rich with 500 *l.* a year, to the envy and reproach of others that are poor with their Thousands : For as Citizens say of their Shops, *Home seldom fails to keep those that keep home.*

To Gentlemen of the Third Rank, *viz.* whose Estates are expectant or incumbred, 'tis indeed more expedient to marry for Riches, yet is not such obligation equal to all ; neither indeed seems it requisite but in particular cases, where discretion perhaps would rather dictate the preferring of single Life, or at least the deferring of Marriage ; for Instance ; If to a certain fair expectance there be for the present only a bare pension.

I know it is a Maxim authorised by current practice,

ſtice, That encumbred Eſtates are beſt cleared with Marriage-portions ; but it proves a treacherous Cure, neither indeed is it a proper expedient : For if the Eſtate be great and the Encumbrance comparatively ſmall, an eaſie ſale would beſt diſcharge it, leaving the Patrimony ſound and the Owner free. And one who having thus ſettled his Affairs, and afterwards weds to his beſt Choice, ſhall ſooner thrive and purchaſe than the moſt prosperous Fortune-catcher. But if the Debt be a dangerous Sum, the payment of it by Marriage is next to deſperate ; it faring with ſuch Adventurers as with Privateers, who, betwixt the charge of Rigging, hazard of miſſing and triumph of getting Booties are in all Events deſtined to be Bankrupts. Like cold Drink in a Fever, it cools the mouth, but inflames the blood ; and at beſt helps no otherwiſe to patch up an encumbred and declining Condition, than doth an outward Prop to ſupport a crazie Building. Much might however be alledged in excuſe for thoſe, whoſe exigencies ſo ſtimulate and perplex them, that they neither freely act nor clearly judge ; whereas our Gentlemen of large and entire Eſtates, when they wrack upon that Coaſt, are purely to thank themſelves.

You will tell me, Marriage now lies under great obloquy, as a Phlegmatick ſtate of Life, yielding no variety but of trouble ; fit only for the blew or Leathern-apron, but uneaſie for men of generous Minds and free Fortunes, preſumed not to brook ſuch reſtraint of their Converſations and Appetites : 'Tis repreſented as the Purgatory of Perſons and Canker of Eſtates ; nay, the Rules of the King's Bench (if ſome of our Wits may be credited) have more El-
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bow-rom : for oft methinks it proves so, the greater their reproach, who so fondly abandon their true interest, and disparage it ; there being certainly no real inconvenience which well-advised Marriage imposes, no honest freedom which it denies to men of plentiful Estates ; rather many advantages peculiar to it, it being their great Prerogative, that their Choice is in effect unconfin'd : For we daily see, that the owner of a fair and plentiful Revenue, dispensing but with Portion, needs not despair of success almost in any other pursuit ; and 'tis no less certain, that to persons of such Fortune Portions are superfluous.

The most common and plausible excuse of our ignoble Matches, is the same Scare-crow which frights so many from marrying at all, forsooth, the apprehension of being over-charged with Children, to the clogging of their Estates, or at least abridging of their Pomp : A consideration at best otherwise : For since by singular Providence, even Families of ordinary Rank and Estate, in stead of being burthened, are notably supported by numerous Posterity. How secure from that danger must our eminent Landlords be ! rather what Latitude have they for Bounty, with allowance for some Vanity !

But there is one mistake common to great Landlords and great Princes, or rather Parallel between them. Great Princes were ever noted to place all their Glory in Conquest, supposing, that if with infinite Charge and Hazard, to the oppression of their subjects and neighbours, they added one little Province of their own acquiring to their vast Dominions and Titles, they gave a sufficient account

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of their Sceptres : Whereas they then pursue the real Interest of Empire, when by due execution of good Laws, and careful obedience of their People, they govern more securely, nay, more absolutely than the Sultan doth with his Scemitar ; rendring small Territories equivalent to Monarchies. With like prejudice great Landlords, even those that carry the name of Wisdom, amuse and perplex themselves in pursuit of somewhat to be acquired by Marriage or purchase, no doubt as a Trophy of their good conduct ; forsaking in the mean time their more noble and solid advantage, which consists in the generous Fruition and gradual Improvement of what they already possess. 'Tis one of the sorest evils under the Sun, the very Canker of wealth, like the Worm in the Gourd, that one already seized of a vast estate (more perhaps than he hath heart to use or Brain to manage) should harass or but disease himself in the acquist of some little accession : more brutish herein than Beasts, who being in rich Pastures, break no Fences, nor look any further. How happy were it, could such but be acquainted with the goodly privileges and improvements of their Estates by discreet enjoyment ; so at least, as not to seek what they have, and dearly buy, or rather sell and betray their own Fortunes ! To see a Gentleman of Estate, out of the Usurer's reach, and without colour of Exigence, not rashly, but industriously and with great ostentation of wisdom, for sorry pelf and lucre, expose himself, with all his hopes and advantages, to the venture (indeed certain mischief) of an unworthy Match ; what is it but to be suborn'd to his own manifest wrong, and hired as it were

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to destroy himself? such error being every way surrounded with repentance.

In the first place, 'tis an authentick Observation, That great Portions are commonly attended with great disappointments and frauds; however, that Land is rarely therewith purchased or Estates improved, almost as seldom as with Moneys won at play; they serving for the most part rather like Sawces to humour the palate and whet the appetite, than food to nourish; dangerous Fewel, and Decoys of vanity and expence. I grant that such as have little or no other fund oft-times speed better with them; partly by reason of the thrift to which they have been obliged, little being from such expected; chiefly for that great kindness on the Womans side, being the ground-work of such Matches, disposes them to chearful compliance: Much like Offices and Court-employments, which though commodious for Cadets, yet with great Landlords we find scarce turn to account. When the Bills of Wooing, Wedding, and Honey-year are defraid, the Baste I doubt proves more than the Roast.

Yet in pursuit thereof, the Fortune-catcher disclaims all those nobler Considerations and Attractives, most of which are singly without comparison to be preferr'd, but some inestimable, for that by Nature, Precept or Example they are propagated, (*viz.*) lovely Feature and Shape, graceful Motion, sound Constitution, Gayety of Humour, Quickness of Wit, discreet Behaviour, approved Huswifery, &c. In lieu whereof he oft-times both stifles his Affections and buries his Family, by marrying certain Barrenness or Infirmary, courting imperfections which

carry with them an Attainder of Blood. At best; he blindly subjects even his present Fortune to the discretion of a woman taken at random from the Lottery of a licentious Age. For with what Arms shall he defend himself from her Wantonness, Malice, or but Folly? Some indeed oppose the Husband's Authority as a sufficient Target; but alas! our Prisons, I doubt may now afford a full Regiment of such Martyrs: so dangerous a Privilege hath it prov'd of late for our fair Ladies to be unconcern'd in Debts of their own contracting, and so make their Husband's *Mittimus* at their pleasure. Stay, there is yet (if possible) a sharper Sting in the tayl of this Miscarriage; for to win those unprofitable Trophies, vast Joyntures, and even Liquid Rents are often extorted, Conveyances and Trusts are multiplied to dangerous Expence, but far more dangerous Encumbrance; indeed the endless perplexing of Claims and Titles, a fruitful Sedolet of pernicious Suits and Discords in after-times. Troth, if the Husband henceforth write *Philip* and *Mary*, 'tis all he can hope for: She reckons his Estate her Purchase, and disputes his Property; not to lie admonish'd without Sullenness, nor controll'd without the menace of a final Breach, and intimation of worse, the danger of Elopment being fairly provided for by sutable Alimony of course presum'd: towards which, and for the perfect binding of foolish Jealousie to its good behaviour, on the same worthy Consideration whole Patrimonies are likewise settled; whereby at one dash the sheepish Owner, forfeiting as it were his Inheritance becomes a sorry Pensioner, divested of all Authority, unable to serve his Prince or Friend, or help himself in case of

of any Exigent unforeseen. His eldest Son he makes his Landlord of an interest wholly forreign and independent, able to borrow more pounds than himself can fairly shillings; and claiming not by descent, much less by his Father's bounty, but by even his own or his Mothers purchase, or at least the wise provision of his Parents on that side. No marvel then if his Obedience prove answerable, since without some preternatural Obligation, 'tis daily seen what becomes of filial Duty and Reverence. His younger Children, like Estrich's Eggs, he exposes to pity, that is, contempt, and the miseries that attend poverty and quality in conjunction; oft-times disabling himself so much as to countenance them in a Mechanick Course, with such manifest hardship, that he can never look clearly on them, nor almost challenge their observance. Thus it happens to his Family, as where Dung lies still unspread; the whole Farm is Barren, and the Maxime noisom. But besides all this, to me methinks it is not a little strange; that in the very Bargain such Fallacies should be obtruded on men endued with Number and Sense. First the Portion is computed to yield an Income answerable to the Current Rate of Interest, and measures for Settlement accordingly taken; whereas, though it came clearly to account (as scarce ever it doth) yet with Gentlemen of noble and free Estate, whose stock seldom runs in that Channel, 'tis fair if it turn to half that profit; and then 'tis admitted as a Revenue proportioned to the present Maintenance and Port of Wives: when, alas, were it fairly examined, not grossly swallowed like a Dutch Reckoning *Altmeale*;
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it would but too plainly appear, the Pomp of such Women is rarely defrayed at double the charge: For so great is their overweening, so little their tenderness or Justice to their Husbands (into whose Families they are not kindly engrafted) that those who at their Parents allowance were proud enough of keeping their Maid, and gloried in the Managery of a sorry Stipend, do, on their Marriage, even challenge an exorbitant Train and boundless Expence, little caring what becomes of their Husbands, so they hold fast their joyntures.

On the other side, a generous and prudent match, is further improved with divers Felicities naturally attending it; which I shall endeavour by way of *Antithesis* to exemplifie in many pregnant Instances.

To those golden Idols of course belongs a superstitious worship, with such tedious and frivolous addresses and pursuit for the most part, as, besides the present Excess, lays a foundation for future unthrif, (a Torrent which is scarce to be suddenly check'd;) so driving men upon all accounts to a scurvy After-game. For though the Oaths of Suitors are become a By-word (as for their Vanity they deserve) yet at best they are dangerous impertinencies, scarce consistent with Wisdom or Honour. To vow a Talent with meaning a Drachme, to flatter egregiously without ground of Truth, how vile and abject is it! And if such as use it meet with the success they merit, by being taken at their words, are they not paid in their own Coyn? For how can they worthily assert that Authority which they have so prostrated? And with what Forehead can they challenge

lenge that Duty, where they have sworn such Fealty and done such Homage? He at once cuts off all this Pageantry, who appay'd in his Self-sufficiency without other regard, gratifies his inclinations, makes his own Conditions, and is courted to his real advantage: he breaks not his word, in keeping and using his power, nor renders himself Usurper to his own Right; but finds her indeed a Wife whom he never made a Mistress, nor furnish'd with any pretence of aspiring to it. How little soever she brings, I dare profess, that at seven years end, on this account, he shall boast of his Bargain.

It hath been noted as the fatal Error of our common Oeconomy to begin at the wrong end, by indulging present Excess, and projecting future Thrift: We see goodly Vessels daily split upon that Rock; whereat none will marvel that consider how preposterous and almost impracticable it is, from the difficulty of playing the After-game of Fortune and reforming evil (but especially voluptuous) Habits; from the daily growing charge of Children and their Education, as also from the disrepute attending such Retrenchments. Besides, of what consequence in it self considered must it be to save or spend at first? Since a stock timely saved, may by easie improvement in some years double its Capital; but a Sum early borrowed shall within the same period quadruple its Debt: whereby the perpetual plenty or penury of Families, with all the ensuing benefits or mischiefs seem chiefly hereon to depend. Hence that homely but useful Proverb, of taking her down in her Wedding-shoes; which to Wives not intoxicated with Fortune is familiar enough: where-

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as those Courting stocks, from the Cradle cockered, and only wedded to their Wills, are not to be convinced but by late Experience, the curst School-mistress of Fools.

No man is so unvers'd in household or worldly affairs, but must observe how good Families are preserved, and both interest and repute advanced by the honourable Residence of Landlords upon their Demesnes, by constant absence or frequent motion undermin'd and eclipsed : Insomuch as some stick not to averr, that before the common use of Coaches, few but Traytors or Felons made shipwrack of their Freeholds. Indeed if the Husband should be forth by occasions or on publick Service, yet what hath the Wife to do, but stay at home, and as a trusty Deputy act for his interest by his order in his stead ? Her House is her proper Sphere, her best Title that of Huswifery ; which if she merit not, she is so far from being a help meet for him, as she is certainly his great encumbrance. But is this the practice of our Female-sparks ? are these the Maxims of such as by the false measures, and with the natural arrogance of rich Wives, ever fancy they have over-bought their Husbands and under-sold themselves ? Do they espouse their Husbands welfare, or but consider it in competition with their own ease, appetite or humour ? What noise is heard but the loud Eccho's of their Fortune, with challenge of Equipage and Expence in their Judgment sutable, that is, vastly exceeding it, and such as few Estates can support ? Is not Home their banishment, and *London* indeed their home ? If their Lot be not to live in that or some other good Town or place of like charge and diversification

tisement, what exceptions are taken! what objections and delays contrived! The Air is either too moist or too cold, too thick or too thin; the ways thereabouts to be sure are either dirty or stony; the House too solitary or too near a Street, not of modern Fabrick, or modish Furniture: The Gentry of those parts not Courtly; not a man it should seem within ken qualified for a Gallant; the Commonalty rude, &c. Possibly they are at length hal'd to their homes as to Prisons, but hir'd, forsooth, with the Donative of a Child's portion or two, to purchase Toys for the Wife, and therewith quiet for the Husband. Being placed at the Helm of a good Family, like a Monkey at the Steerage of a ship, their first care is to solicit acquaintance, and their main business consists in the Ceremony of receiving and returning visits; their Entertainments finding work for three or four Servants, their very Salutations and Appointments too for almost as many: so that here to act the part of good Husbands in the Vulgar notion both to Wives and Estates, to gratifie the one and preserve the other is perhaps next door to impossible.

The good Nature of Children singly considered is of greater moment and advantage than wealth, the improvements of it being far more excellent, and the miscarriages less reparable. For what recompense of Fortune to a Creeple, a diseased Body, an uncomely person, above all, a crooked Mind? and what Portion equal to those personal Endowments, the propriety whereof neither Fortune nor malice can invade? To this eminent Duty the true Huswife dedicates her time and pains: her Children are her

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Garden,

Garden, her Park, nay her Court. In their tender years her business is to protect them from disasters and injuries, to secure their health and growth, to observe their Genius, to instruct them in their best Capacities, yet rather leading than driving them, and supplying their defects with her skill and diligence; in all which her thrift is sutable to her tenderness. Her Sons she early resigns to their Father's Discipline, never interrupting it with pernicious fondness: In their riper years, she insensibly trains them to laudable Qualities: (yet for use not ostentation) her Lectures and Charms chiefly tending to the banishment of pride and sloth. Having thus seasoned them with Principles of Thrift and Content, she scrapes not for portions, nor is solicitous of their preferment, which she trusts may succeed to her wish, as commonly it doth; however she acquits and satisfies her self with this reasonable confidence, that if they prove not fortunate, they can scarce be miserable; which yet to our delicate and shiftless Dames frequently happens. But will our She-gallant now adays admit any such vulgar duty as the attendance of her Children; surely, that she leaves for Mechanics, assigning the drudgery thereof to Hirelings, who accordingly perform it to treble Charge and Expence, as needless, as fruitless: she hears not their complaints or wants, much less sees them, but in their sad effects, incurable lameness or sickness, to the sudden expiring even of fruitful Families; no, the importance of her Dresses or Treatments affords not leisure for such trifles; or if to supererogate she mind them by fits, yet through her partiality or uneven Temper, such regard proves worse than neglect. On her

her Sons (especially the eldest) of course she dotes underhand fomenting their stubbornness to the overthrow of whatsoever their Father with his Wisdom builds. In fine, her chief care is to cultivate their pride, the rankest Weed of our Nature, by good parents so industriously subdued : To her own *Idea* she frames them, for indeed better Principles or Manners than she hath how should she infuse ? so that people in the Streets scarce forbear to proclame them Chips of the old Block ; and at last in despite of their Father's provision, 'tis great odds, they marry either to his disparagement or their Husbands undoing.

The exact survey of their own Estates is a skill and employment more worthy of prudent Landlords, than some other their Entertainments, plausible indeed but not practicable ; were it more in request, good Families would not so fast decline. It would impartially discover to them their strength or weakness, and acquaint them what indeed they have to spend ; which I dare pronounce is seldom half so much as Fame and Opinion suggest unto them : For computing Revenues now adays with their manifold losses and Reprises, they prove in effect like some fruits, little more than Shells and Parage ; which how generally soever discours'd, is seldom rightly stated, save by such as have smarted for their Experience of it. But how harsh a note is this to our Damsels, enured to reckon by thousands ! Can they disgorge what they have so well digested, or patiently hear, that in the estimate of their Husband's Income, there happen'd, forsooth, an unlucky mistake of Pounds instead of Nobles ? Alas ! that might endanger the gilding of their next Coach, the reduce-

ment of their Equipage, their forbearance of *London*, &c. No, there's a trick worth two of that, even to set the best foot forward ; not to brook such unfavoury Truths, but rather to their own and their Husband's Credit, to admit the popular Cry, and with it conspire to his Bane.

Of like necessary use is it to be vers'd in the Rates and Measures of household Expence, which in well-govern'd Families should be almost as regular as the victualling of Fleets; to have the faculty of handsom, but withal provident House-keeping and Entertainment; of procuring Equipage and Furniture of all sorts at the best hand, likewise of adjusting, preserving and repairing it : for want whereof our English Ladies are said to have contracted such obloquy in *Holland*, where by reason of the constant dearness of Provisions, and endless Payments, no man of what Estate soever without great frugality can thrive or well subsist, that a Dutch man scarce marries one of them without the loss of his Trading-credit. Some of these Qualities the right-bred Huswife sucked in with her Mothers milk, others she learned with her *A B C*, and for the rest proves no Truant, her Genius being active, and fixed on the *Idea* of Huswifery as its proper object ; wherein her defects, if any, are of course supplied by her Husbands Experience, whose Advice, whether directory or monitory, finds her ear always open to it. But what hope of enammelling a mere Flint ? what thought of instructing persons too dull to apprehend of themselves, too froward to learn ? Offer our Female Libertines any Counsel that trenches on their Vanity, or pinches their Sloth, 'tis at best *durus ser-*
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no, and accordingly with them it speeds ; reckoning or contrivance, it should seem, are as much below their breeding as Thrift : Rather they have conferr'd notes with the good Fellows, whose generous Maxime, they say, is to drink as long as the Cup will ramn ; the utmost extent of their Husband's credit (if they can carry it by hook or by crook) being the only limit of their Expence : otherwise Estates could not be so commonly blown up without noise, and as it were with white Powder, nor mouldred away by good, that is, demure and well-meaning Wives, faster, methinks, than even bad Husbands dispatch them.

Of Wives advisedly taken from a frugal Stock, the same proof may reasonably be expected as of Trees chosen out of a Nursery, the Glebe whereof is sound but barren, and remov'd into a richer Soil ; or like a Rhenish Grape transplanted into a Southern Climate, the Race whereof is said to be our right Canary. Such are commonly unacquainted with delicacy or sloth, and early seasoned with this Principle, That their esteem for Virtue and Huswifery is their best Portion : so as the improvement of their Condition by Marriage to their Native Qualities, must needs add that of Content and Complacence, than which nothing is in Wives more amiable. The Restraint of others proves their Manumission, and they are apt to err on the safer hand, Retirement : or if their sprightly Genius with their Youth should incline them to the Gayety of Towns and Treatments, yet not being naturalized thereto by Custom, they are by the sense of their Duty or personal Engagement without violence reclaimed. Nor

is this happy Temper only considerable in it self, but in the soveraign influence it hath on their Husbands, thereby often wean'd from their Extravagancies: whereas there is no Purgatory to the unquiet Conversation of some Wives, when their boundless appetites or lofty expectations are not gratified. The turbulency of such, if *Solomon* may be credited, turns a Palace into a Cottage, or, if we will trust Experience, into *Bridewel* or *Bedlam*. Nay though it be but the common Chagrin, and little moods of our peevish and affected Dames, the endless impertinence of them too often so disturbs men of better Principles and Humour, that finding themselves uneasy sojourners in their Houses, under pretence of Civil Inclination, have courted their divertisement in the freedom of Lodgings at *London*, or welcome of Inns and Taverns which their Purse command. But then whilst the Lawless freedom of these Planets by inviting Courtship, if it betray them not, yet seldom fails of exposing even the best of them to their Husband's just resentment, nay to Lampoons and Vulgar Censures, with indelible stains of Honour; the wise and decent Reservedness of these fixed Orbs, as it worthily endears them to their Husbands, so it preserves no less their Fame than their Virtue, and perfumes their Memory.

And as there is nothing more fulsome than the pride of these goodly Cyphers at the Spring-tide of prosperity, so in any ebb of Fortune, by their drooping and whining they at best discover their dross. Take from these Birds of *Juno* their Train, and is there ought so vulgar, indeed so despicable? But though their Spirits sink, 'tis great odds their Spleens rise;

rise; and then whether the decay proceed from public Calamity, private misfortune, or, as too oft it happens, through their own fault, Reason and Patience give place to Fury and Clamour: the portions they brought are aloud objected, and their Husbands (though indeed the chief, if not the only sufferers) arraign'd for betraying their innocent wives to the distress of missing their Coaches and Liveries: the noise and anguish whereof is to ingenuous Natures so sensible, that it drives them as it were in their own defence to purchase their present quiet with ruinous compliance and concealment of their Exigencies; it being observ'd that our Domestick breaches (now so familiar) have generally their rise from the first visible decay of Husbands in their Estates, and their necessary abridging the superfluity of such Wives: for they are mere Summer-friends, and a sort of Legal Concubines; their love depends on their fare, and no Penny, no *Pater noster*, is their Principle. What a Cordial is this to men in affliction! such a female Comfort for all the world had *Job*. Much happier is the Omen of generous Matches, Desert being the womans Dowry: To such the vicissitudes of Fortune are no surprisals. The Virtue of their Education qualifies even their prosperity, and for the most part secures it: but if the same wings of wealth which brought it to them, should carry it from their Husbands, they retreat in order, and easily renew their old acquaintance with Thrift; nay, with less reluctance can they go, if need be, to *America*, than most Wives are drawn from *London* into some neighbouring County; as owning their Husbands welfare for their only interest, and that

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for their Country whither his occasions call them; whose very Eclipse by such chearful aid and compliance proves to him a state rather of Temperance and Retirement than want.

But lastly and chiefly, great Portions (as before was hinted) are dearly purchased with answerable Joyntures to the exceeding detriment of good Families, by keeping the Heirs almost in perpetual Nonage: whereas by dispensing in point of Fortune, all such pretences vanish, and moderate provisions (consistent with the well-being thereof) are chearfully embraced; which being accordingly made in in Bar of Dower, and (for the greater share) limited to continue only during Widowhood, are likewise the best, perhaps only sufficient Fences against those fatal Trespasses and Disseisins, which commonly ensue from the rashness of young wantons in the choice of their second Beds: the Fortune-catcher through his silly purchase and groundless confidence, proving in the mean time little better than a Pimp to his ignoble successor, and a Butcher to his posterity, expos'd almost as a certain prey to the Intruder. For daily experience acquaints us, that as Widows (so continuing, and honourably retaining the name and memory of their first Affections) are of all others the most faithful and happy Guardians and Executors; so there is no hostility to the unnaturalness of Mothers, when forsaking as it were their Colours, and betaking themselves to the adverse party, they become a kind of Stepdames to their own Brood.

I foresee you will meet with several Objections, commonly urged in excuse of that ignoble Principle and

and practice, *viz.* the dispensing with any thing in Marriage rather than Money, and compassing the Golden Wedge on any terms, which with one of your Judgment must even carry little weight: however I shall briefly examine the most material of them.

'Tis alledged 1. That these Maxims and Assertions, at least divers of them, are obnoxious to the fair Ladies frowns. 2. If the maintenance of Wives be so costly as is here surmised, and if there be such failour or contingency in the Revenue of Land, the greater still the obligation of marrying for Money. 3. By dispensing with Portion suitable to the Estate, men incur the popular Censure of being overreach'd in their bargain, and so forfeit the esteem for discretion. 4. Joyntures answerable to the Quality of Husbands, and our Legal rate of Dower seem decent if not necessary. 5. Settlement of Estates upon Marriage hath been ever reputed and found the best preservative of them from being squandered by the profuseness, or forfeited by the precipitancy of Youth. 6. Straitness of Fortune is generally attended with meanness of Education. 7. There are no such Qualities in women as can recompense want of Portion, nor any such defects as to counterpoise a vast Dowry, and therefore those surmises vain. 8. Such is the Lottery of Marriage through the disguises of women, that the whole Advice seems fantastical; true worth having no outward Mark. 9. 'Tis confin'd to Gentlemen of great and clear Estates who are few, and therefore at best of little use. 10. Even of such the greater part marry at an age scarce capable of those Counsels, being sway'd by their amo-

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vous inclinations ; and whatever caution is used in the Bargain, yet by the insinuation of crafty Wives 'twill be afterwards easily defeated. 11. To redress even abuses of such prescription is a frivolous Enterprize, neither will men be so dazeled with meer flourishes, as not to see and pursue their solid Interests.

To the first 'tis readily answered, That all fair and deserving Ladies will, I doubt not, take me for their Advocate ; and if they smile, the frowns of others shall the less concern me : under that Imperial Banner I assure my self both of safety and victory.

To the second I cannot better reply, than by referring to the several *Antitheses* betwixt Huswives and Gallants ; which, together with the notorious fallacy and encumbrance of great Portions stop the mouth of this Objection. To say the truth, 'tis with women as with Fire and Water ; nothing so destructive where they prevail or exceed, nothing so innocent and useful in their proper limits.

To the third ; Men should act with Reason, not regarding popular Censure, their real welfare being of greater consequence to them, than the verdict of that incompetent Jury. As to their being overreach'd, may not the retaining the Dominion of their Estates abundantly salve their Credit ? Surely they will be so far from fearing the Censure of wise men, as rather to win their applause, and perhaps invite their imitation.

The fourth might better have been urged formerly, when Widows were indeed such. But if in moderate and limited Joyntures there be Errour, 'tis at least a safe one, reparable at pleasure, in case of
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special confidence or desert ; the other mischief in case of demerit, being irretrievable : nay, the very reservation of Power in the Husband to oblige or resent is perhaps the life of his Authority.

To the fifth, Though no humane Providence be entire and complete ; yet the absolute dependence of eldest Sons on their Father's bounty is the likeliest means to secure their Duty, and curb their Perverseness and Extravagance : however let them at least owe their ruine to their own, not their Father's folly ; and if perish they must, die rather like men than beasts, ordained to be innocently sacrificed.

The sixth reflects untowardly on our Gentry, who though disabled to raise Mountains for their Daughters, yet oft-times recompence that want with generous and usefull Breeding, such as Money perhaps cannot compass, and will therefore disdain that Vulgar scandal.

The seventh bids defiance to common Experience, which affords frequent Examples of Wives, by whose Huswifery, without advantage of Dowry, weak and encumbered Estates, even in adverse times, have been notably rescued and improved : but of eminent Landlords by hundreds, without any visible improvidence of their own, strangely undone through the Vanity of women. Nay, there is scarce any numerous Brood, which presents not this variety even among Sisters ; some whereof were born for the support of Husbands, others for their downfall : so considerable is that Sex to the Lustre or Eclipse of Families. Indeed were Wives but so just or good-natur'd as to continue their Maiden-thrift in their married State, Husbands would grow but too rich.

The eighth reduces the matter to blind Chance, disabling not only Reason but Sense. Much I allow to the Artifice of Women in appearing to advantage, and with such outfides sordid Minds are affected, like greedy Vermine caught with slight Baits ; there would not otherwise be such Devotions paid to such sorry Saints : But men of noble Intention are not so enchanted ; Real worth being to such as discernible from Affectation, as fine Silver from Alchymy. or true Beauty from Dawbing.

For the ninth, I admit Gentlemen of entire Estates to be herein concern'd, but not exclusively to persons of all degrees having any solid Fund of Revenue ; these Maxims being proportionably Universal.

The tenth is grounded on the presumption of inexcusable Fondness in most that marry. Truly I have not of late observ'd that amorous humour to be very predominant in our Matches ; the other and worse Extreme of preferring a Licentious Celibate, or marrying with a vicious intent, being, methinks, in far more request. Some there will ever be, in whom Fortune and Folly conspire to their ruine : These I abandon as Strays and Forfeits to the Lord of the Mannour where they first light ; but they are comparatively fools. The danger of defeating Conditional Settlements seems yet more remote, there being little fear of such dotage in those Husbands who had once the Prudence to make them ; and less encouragement, one would think, for Wives, by such plain dealing, to proclaim their design of Second Marriage.

The last were indeed a just Exception, if herein-I
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pretended to more than the advising my Friend: The subject I confess is copious enough; one might without straining argue the importance of it to the publick, what price, and consequently what life it would give to the languishing Virtues of Women; what a Curb it would prove, not only to that Sexes Vanity, but to Luxury in general, it being notorious that in effect all our ruinous Pomp may be charged on womens account, as being either by them, or for them incurred. What a sumptuary Law it would prove, if the extravagance of Wooings and Weddings were reduced to their simple Decorum; How it would restore the Lustre of our Gentry; how it would check the pride of our Money-monger, chiefly founded in their greedy swallowing of his treacherous Baits; How it would advance the noble interest of Land, by rescuing it from the snare of cheap and prostitute Encumbrances, &c. But you see I trouble not the Policks, leaving our Wits to dispute, whether the general disallowing or limiting of Marriage portions were profitable or practicable: Let others use their discretion, and take their fortune, you, I dare say, are neither Votary nor slave to Custom.

To conclude this tedious Epistle, Marry in God's name; your Ancestors deserve and require it of you, who both by their Virtue rais'd a Family worthy to be continued, and by their providence left you an Estate sufficient to continue, nay, to enlarge it. Let no licentious Principle of the Age divert, nor Vulgar Prejudice deter you from a state of Life for you so expedient; and which for Gentlemen of your condition, (what ever may be surmised) hath no Fetters

ters but of their own forging : Marry, I say, but generously and circumspectly, even the most worthy or lovely person you can meet with or hear of. 'Tis a debt due to your Posterity that you propagate the best you can ; nay you owe it most of all to your self and your own welfare : if somewhat must be dispensed with (as in all worldly matters there certainly must) let it be money, since that to my knowledge you least want : but for the propriety of your Estate, let nothing wrest it from you, and scorn that all the Bags in *London* should decoy you to settle it : reckon it to you as sacred and essential, as to Princes their Militia or Negative Vote ; and part no more with it, than, were you a Sovereign, you would be bought or cajol'd tamely to resign your Sceptre. For matter of Joynture use your own Latitude ; but limit the main of it to Widowhood, or the Heir's Minority, as you see cause. Be not so supine as to make no provision against Power ; above all beware of Liquid Rents : Be Captain of your own Pinnacle whatever it cost you ; what you lose in the Hundred, you will abundantly recover in the County ; and though you finger not a Token, know 'tis the best bargain you will ever drive. For your general and final direction take that of the Roman Poet,

Veniunt à Dote Sagittæ :

With this of the famous Epigrammatist,

Inferior

*Inferior Matrona suo sit, Prisce, Marito,
Haud aliter fiunt femina virque pares.*

And thus heartily wishing prosperity to your noble Resolutions, I always continue,

S I R,

Your Faithful Kinsman

and Servant

A. B.

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